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Free communication tools for people in need

**Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary**  
**Federal Communications Commission**  
**445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW; Room TW-B204**  
**Washington, DC 20554**

**This is a public comment for WC Docket Number 12-375.**

Dear Secretary Dortch,

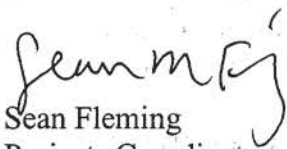
I am writing to discuss the importance of prison phone justice. Men and women incarcerated in our prisons face countless barriers as they attempt to become re-acclimated to main stream society. To find a job or a place to live requires a phone number to suffice for basic communication needs. Open Access Connections, a nonprofit organization located in St Paul MN, provides a free voicemail service that serves as that basic communication need.

Moreover, free voicemail is not available for men and women who are incarcerated. Incarcerated persons do not have many options to communicate with loved ones. \$.25/a minute is not a reasonable rate for men and women incarcerated in our prisons. Often, the rate of in-state phone calls made exceeds that of long-distance phone-call rates.

As a homeless advocate, I have seen the difference having phone access makes. Equitable phone rates in prison, much like having basic phone service outside prison walls, helps to empower people to take the necessary steps to pull themselves out of poverty. Rate caps on interstate prison phone calls have not only resulted in lower costs, but have also made it easier for folks leaving prison to find jobs and acclimate back into mainstream society.

Secretary Dortch, please consider this letter and take the necessary steps to reform prison phone calling.

Sincerely,

  
Sean Fleming

Projects Coordinator

Open Access Connections

[www.openaccessconnections.org](http://www.openaccessconnections.org)

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